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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004050

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD
USAID/ANE/MEA
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR O'FRIEL
USCINCENT/CCPA, USCENTCOM REAR MACDILL AFB FL
NICOSIA FOR ILMG
STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: JORDAN: MEDIA REACTION ON ARAB MINISTERS
WASHINGTON MEETING, IRAQ, JORDANIAN DETAINED IN DETROIT

SUMMARY

NEWS REPORTS IN JORDAN'S DAILIES COVERED THE POSITIVE
NOTE EXPRESSED BY ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS AFTER THEIR
MEETING, WHICH WOULD BE RESUMED IN A WEEK.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARIES COMMENTED SKEPTICALLY ABOUT THE
OPTIMISM EXPRESSED BY ARAB MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AFTER THEIR WASHINGTON MEETINGS.

ALL DAILIES REPORTED THAT THE FAMILY OF OMAR AL-
SHISHANI, WHO WAS DETAINED IN DETROIT, AFFIRMED THAT
SHISHANI WOULD BE RELEASED ON WEDNESDAY, AND THAT THE
DETENTION WAS THE RESULT OF A CONFUSION OVER NAMES.

NEWS REPORTS

NEWS REPORTS IN JORDAN'S DAILIES REPORTED THE POSITIVE
NOTE AFTER THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TALKS, WHICH WOULD
BE RESUMED IN A WEEK, ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS. CENTER-
LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR LED WITH A
REPORT THAT THE PNA FEARS A GENERAL FAMINE.

IN AN EXCLUSIVE STORY, CENTER-LEFT, INFLUENTIAL ARABIC
DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ATTRIBUTED TO THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY
AND TRADE THE STATEMENT MADE UPON HIS RETURN FROM
BAGHDAD, THAT A JORDANIAN-IRAQI FREE TRADE AGREEMENT
WOULD BE SIGNED SOON.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

-- JOHNSON'S LETTER AND BUSH'S AFFIRMATIONS
PROMINENT DAILY COLUMNIST TARIQ MASARWAH WROTE IN SEMI-
OFFICIAL INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON JULY 22:
"WE REMEMBER VIVIDLY THE LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LB
JOHNSON TO HIS MAJESTY THE LATE KING HUSSEIN, IN WHICH
HE SAID THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES' ACCEPTANCE OF LORD
CARADON'S INITIATIVE, WHICH BECAME RESOLUTION 242,
WOULD ENABLE HIS ADMINISTRATION TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT
WITHIN SIX MONTHS. HUNDREDS OF MONTHS LATER, WE RECALL
THIS TO THE ARAB MINISTERS WHO CAME BACK FROM
WASHINGTON BEARING THE AFFIRMATIONS OF PRESIDENT BUSH,
HIS OPTIMISM, AND HIS CLARITY THAT THE PALESTINIAN
STATE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN THREE YEARS, PROVIDED
THAT THE COUNTRIES WHO HAD ACCEPTED LORD CARADON'S
INITIATIVE WOULD ONLY ACCEPT TO END TERRORISM, END
CORRUPTION, AND PRODUCE AN ACCEPTABLE PALESTINIAN
LEADERSHIP. WE REMIND THESE MINISTERS THAT THEY ONLY
HAVE PRESIDENT BUSH'S VERBAL ASSURANCES. THIS TIME
THERE IS NOT EVEN A LETTER. BUT WHAT IS THERE TO
PREVENT OPTIMISM?"

-- WILL DROPPING THE OPTION OF RESISTANCE RESTORE
LEGITIMATE RIGHTS?
DAILY COLUMNIST MAZEN AL-SAKET WROTE IN CENTER-LEFT,
INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-DUSTOUR ON JULY 22:
"DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. ON THE ONE
HAND AND EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, AND THE PNA ON
THE OTHER, ALL REVOLVE AROUND 'ENDING THE VIOLENCE,'
WHICH MEANS DROPPING THE PALESTINIANS OPTION OF
RESISTING THE OCCUPATION. IS IT SUFFICIENT FOR THE U.S.
TO DICTATE THIS POSITION TO ARAB MINISTERS WHILE
ISRAELI EXPANSION AND SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY CONTINUE?
WHAT GUARANTEES DO THE PARTICIPATING ARAB COUNTRIES
OFFER US THAT THE REQUIRED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WOULD
TAKE PLACE, AND THAT PALESTINIANS WOULD RECOVER THEIR
LEGITIMATE RIGHTS? WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS THAT
THE MINISTERS TALK ABOUT, WHICH NO ONE OTHER THAN THEM
CAN SEE IN THE AMERICAN POSITION THAT IS TOTALLY BIASED
TO ISRAEL AND THAT CALLS FOR ENDING PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL REPRESENTATION?"

-- THE TRIPARTITE DELEGATION RETURNS OPTIMISTIC
DAILY COLUMNIST JAMIL AL-NIMRI WROTE IN SEMI-OFFICIAL
INFLUENTIAL ARABIC DAILY AL-RAI ON JULY 22: "THE MAIN
POINT SCORED BY THE DELEGATION IS THAT THEY MOVED BUSH
AWAY FROM HIS INSISTENCE ON REMOVING ARAFAT, IN FAVOR
OF A FORMULA WHEREBY HE WOULD HAVE DIMINISHED POWER.
AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WOULD BE AN AMERICAN-ARAB
MANDATE ON PALESTINIAN REFORMS. IF ALL GOES WELL, THIS
WOULD NOT LEAD TO A RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT, BUT IT
MAY PUT SHARON IN A CORNER AND BRING ABOUT A NEW
SITUATION. REACHING A POLITICAL SOLUTION WILL ALWAYS
REMAIN SUBJECT TO THE ISRAELI PEOPLE ACCEPTING SUCH AN
OPTION, WHICH ALSO MAY BE POSSIBLE AFTER A LONG PERIOD
OF CALM. THERE IS, AT LEAST, AN ELEMENT THAT SERVES
THE PALESTINIANS IN VIEW OF THE GREAT IMBALANCE OF
STANDARDS, WHICH IS THAT THE ISRAELI MILITARY OPTION
WILL NOT RESOLVE THE SITUATION." GNEHM